Nickolai Pads Street Stock Lead With Main Event Victory at Saugus

BY STEVEN FLEISCHMAN,
Special to the Times

Steve Nickolai of Simi Valley may work for a local Ford dealer, but he sure knows how to drive his Chevy.

Nickolai, the points leader in the Street Stock division, increased his lead with a 25-lap main-event win Saturday night at Saugus Speedway before a crowd of 4,344.

Nickolai also won a trophy dash and heat race earlier in the night, all in his 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle. But it wasn't easy.

"We blew the transmission on the figure 8 heat race," said Nickolai, who led the whole way. "We kept it in, though. The thing was shaking and vibrating like you wouldn't believe. On the restarts I started out in fourth gear just to keep the RPMs down."

Dale White Jr., also of Simi Valley, finished second, just ahead of Rip Michels of Arleta.

Brian Kelly of Arleta won the 15-lap Hobby Stock figure 8 main event, his sixth feature race win of the season.

But in the 25-lap Hobby Stock main event, Thad Friday of Reseda held off Kelly's late charge to win.

Friday passed Joe Barreras Jr. of Canyon Country, who had car trouble, on Lap 16 to win his second main event of the season.

Kelly finished second, followed by Shannon Flavin of West Hills and Scott Wade of Burbank.

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Joe Bolio won the 15-lap jalopy main event, passing North Hollywood's Robert Wade, who finished second, on Lap 11. Wade had taken the lead from Andrew Debiaso of Van Nuys on Lap 9 when Debiaso spun out.

John Kirby of Ventura handily won a 12-lap Street Stock semi-main event to advance to the main event. Also advancing were Sue Pittinato of West Hills, Brian Polzin of Saugus and Larry Ofria of Northridge.

Earlier in the night, Rick Crow of Canyon Country broke the track's two-year-old oval qualifying record for Street Stocks with a time of 18.54. The previous record, set in 1987 by John Cran, was 18.62.

Crow might have pushed his car too hard, however, as he blew his transmission. Still, Crow was able to continue after borrowing a transmission from Craig Rayburn.

Barreras, who entered the night eighth in Hobby Stock points, won a figure 8 heat race of Hobby Stock and Jalopy cars. Earlier, Barreras won a trophy dash and another heat race.

in Le Mans, France.

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FOSTER FASTER: North Hollywood's Eric Foster, winner of the 25-lap oval main event a week earlier, came back late Saturday night to take the 15-lap figure-8 feature for NASCAR street stocks at Saugus Speedway.

Simi Valley's Craig Rayburn finished second, Sepulveda's Russ Beckers took third and Ventura's John Kirby was fourth.

Canyon Country's Rick Crow, who won the 25-lap oval main for street stocks earlier in the evening, was 10th in the figure-8 finale.

Brian Kelley of Arleta won both the 25-lap oval main and the 12-lap figure-8 feature for hobby stocks.

Rick Bonifield of Palmdale was the winner of the 12-lap main event for jalopies.